

EXPRESS MAIL LABEL NO.: EV343427253US

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for switching identity of a user that has a first username associated with a first class of users, the method comprising the steps of:
receiving login information from the user, the login information including the first username, an alternate class, and a password;
authenticating the user based on the first username and the password;
and
providing access to the computer system as the alternate class,
wherein the alternate class is different than the first class.
2. The method of claim 1,
wherein the login information further includes a second username, and
in the providing step, access to the computer system is provided with the rights and privileges of the second username.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
verifying that the user is authorized to be provided access to the computer system as the alternate class, ,
wherein the providing step is only performed if the user's authorization is verified.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the verifying step includes the sub-step of looking up the first username in an identity switching authorization table.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the providing step includes the sub-step of presenting the user with a user interface of the alternate class after login.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein in the providing step, the user is provided with the experience of a user in the alternate class.

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7. The method of claim 1, wherein in the receiving step, the first username and alternate class are entered into a single data field so that identity switching is accomplished in only one user step.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of recording an audit trail that includes at least some of the actions performed by the first user, the audit trail including the first username.

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9. A computer program product for switching identity of a user that has a first username associated with a first class of users, the computer program product comprising:

a storage medium readable by a processing circuit and storing instructions for execution by the processing circuit for performing a method comprising the steps of:

receiving login information from the user, the login information including the first username, an alternate class, and a password;

authenticating the user based on the first username and the password; and

providing access to the computer system as the alternate class, wherein the alternate class is different than the first class.

10. The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the login information further includes a second username, and in the providing step of the method, access to the computer system is provided with the rights and privileges of the second username.

11. The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the method further comprises the step of:

verifying that the user is authorized to be provided access to the computer system as the alternate class,

wherein the providing step is only performed if the user's authorization is verified.

12. The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the providing step of the method includes the sub-step of presenting the user with a user interface of the alternate class after login.

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13. The computer program product of claim 9, wherein in the providing step of the method, the user is provided with the experience of a user in the alternate class.

14. The computer program product of claim 9, wherein in the receiving step of the method, the first username and alternate class are entered into a single data field so that identity switching is accomplished in only one user step.

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15. A system for switching identity of a user that has a first username associated with a first class of users, the system comprising:

an interface receiving login information from the user, the login information including the first username, an alternate class, and a password;

a processor authenticating the user based on the first username and the password, and providing access to the computer system as the alternate class, wherein the alternate class is different than the first class.

16. The system of claim 15,

wherein the login information further includes a second username, and

the processor provides access to the computer system with the rights and privileges of the second username.

17. The system of claim 15, wherein the processor verifies that the user is authorized to be provided access to the computer system as the alternate class, and providing access to the computer system as the alternate class only if the user's authorization is verified.

18. The system of claim 15, wherein the processor presents the user with a user interface of the alternate class after login.

19. The system of claim 15, wherein the processor provides the user with the experience of a user in the alternate class.

20. The system of claim 15, wherein in the receiving interface, the first username and alternate class are entered into a single data field so that identity switching is accomplished in only one user step.